

Whereas, many American service personnel have lost their lives, and many more have been wounded, in Iraq, and the American people will always honor their sacrifices and honor their families;

Whereas, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, including their Reserve and National Guard organizations, together with components of the other branches of the military, are under enormous strain from multiple, extended deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan;

Whereas, these deployments, and those that will follow, will have lasting impacts on the future recruiting, retention and readiness of our nation's all volunteer force;

Whereas in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, the Congress stated that "calendar year 2006 should be a period of significant transition to full sovereignty, with Iraqi security forces taking the lead for the security of a free and sovereign Iraq;"

Whereas, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1723, approved November 28, 2006, "determin[ed] that the situation in Iraq continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security;"

Whereas, a failed state in Iraq would present a threat to regional and world peace, and the long-term security interests of the United States are best served by an Iraq that can sustain, govern, and defend itself, and serve as an ally in the war against extremists;

Whereas, Iraq is experiencing a deteriorating an ever-widening problem of sectarian and intra-sectarian violence based upon political distrust and cultural differences between some Sunni and Shia Muslims;

Whereas, Iraqis must reach political settlements in order to achieve reconciliation, and the failure of the Iraqis to reach such settlements to support a truly unified government greatly contributes to the increasing violence in Iraq;

Whereas, the responsibility for Iraq's internal security and halting sectarian violence must rest primarily with the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces;

Whereas, U.S. Central Command Commander General John Abizaid testified to Congress on November 15, 2006, "I met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the Corps Commander, [and] General Dempsey. We all talked together. And I said, in your professional opinion, if we were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq? And they all said no. And the reason is, because we want the Iraqis to do more. It's easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do this work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future;"

Whereas, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki stated on November 27, 2006 that "The crisis is political, and the ones who can stop the cycle of aggravation and blood-letting of innocents are the politicians;"

Whereas, there is growing evidence that Iraqi public sentiment opposes the continued U.S. troop presence in Iraq, much less increasing the troop level;

Whereas, in the fall of 2006, leaders in the Administration and Congress, as well as recognized experts in the private sector, began to express concern that the situation in Iraq was deteriorating and required a change in strategy; and, as a consequence, the Administration began an intensive, comprehensive review of the Iraq strategy, by all components of the Executive branch;

Whereas, in December 2006, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group issued a valuable report, suggesting a comprehensive strategy that includes "new and enhanced diplomatic and political efforts in Iraq and the region, and a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq that will enable the United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly;"

Whereas, on January 10, 2007, following consultations with the Iraqi Prime Minister, the President announced a new strategy (hereinafter referred to as the "plan,") the central element of which is an augmentation of the present U.S. military force structure through additional deployments of approximately 21,500 U.S. military troops to Iraq;

Whereas, this proposed level of troop augmentation far exceeds the expectations of many of us as to the reinforcements that would be necessary to implement the various options for a new strategy, and led many members to express outright opposition to augmenting our troops by 21,500;

Whereas, the Government of Iraq has promised repeatedly to assume a greater share of security responsibilities, disband militias, consider Constitutional amendments and enact laws to reconcile sectarian differences, and improve the quality of essential services for the Iraqi people; yet, despite those promises, little has been achieved;

Whereas, the President said on January 10, 2007 that "I've made it clear to the Prime Minister and Iraq's other leaders that America's commitment is not open-ended" so as to dispel the contrary impression that exists;

Whereas, the recommendations in this resolution should not be interpreted as precipitating any immediate reduction in, or withdrawal of, the present level of forces: Now therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Senate disagrees with the "plan" to augment our forces by 21,500, and urges the President instead to consider all options and alternatives for achieving the strategic goals set forth below with reduced force levels than proposed;

(2) the primary objective of the overall U.S. strategy in Iraq should be to encourage Iraqi leaders to make political compromises that will foster reconciliation and strengthen the unity government, ultimately leading to improvements in the security situation;

(3) the military part of this strategy should focus on maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq, denying international terrorists a safe haven, conducting counterterrorism operations, promoting regional stability, and training and equipping Iraqi forces to take full responsibility for their own security;

(4) United States military operations should, as much as possible, be confined to these goals, and charge the Iraqi military with the primary mission of combating sectarian violence;

(5) the military Rules of Engagement for this plan should reflect this delineation of responsibilities;

(6) the United States Government should transfer to the Iraqi military, in an expeditious manner, such equipment as is necessary;

(7) the Senate believes the United States should continue vigorous operations in Anbar province, specifically for the purpose of combating an insurgency, including elements associated with the Al Qaeda movement, and denying terrorists a safe haven;

(8) the United States Government should engage selected nations in the Middle East to develop a regional, internationally sponsored peace-and-reconciliation process for Iraq;

(9) the Administration should provide regular updates to the Congress, produced by the Commander of United States Central Command and his subordinate commanders, about the progress or lack of progress the Iraqis are making toward this end.

(10) our overall military, diplomatic and economic strategy should not be regarded as an "open-ended" or unconditional commitment, but rather as a new strategy that hereafter should be conditioned upon the Iraqi government's meeting benchmarks that must be specified by the Administration.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under a previous order, the Senate stands in adjournment until 10 a.m., Tuesday, January 23, 2007.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:59 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, January 23, 2007, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate January 22, 2007:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RYAN C. CROCKER, OF WASHINGTON, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE WITH THE RANK PERSONAL RANK OF CAREER AMBASSADOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ.

JOHN D. NEGROPONTE, OF NEW YORK, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE, VICE ROBERT B. ZOELLICK, RESIGNED.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

J. MICHAEL MCCONNELL, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE, VICE JOHN D. NEGROPONTE.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. REX C. MCMILLIAN, 0000